

[CLAIMS]

1-22. (CANCELED).

23. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method of operating an automatic transmission of a motor vehicle having a clutch located between a drive motor and the transmission, the method comprising the steps of:

disengaging the clutch, if engaged, and initiating a first downshift operation only when the vehicle is currently coasting;

~~shifting (a) carrying out a first downshifting operation~~ from a first, higher transmission gear ratio to a second, lower transmission gear ratio during ~~[[a]]~~ coasting ~~[[mode]]~~ while the clutch is disengaged ~~and without any engine braking of the vehicle;~~ and one of:

~~[[b1]] completing terminating~~ the first downshifting operation by engaging ~~engagement of~~ the clutch if a speed of the vehicle is above a predetermined threshold speed greater than zero determined by the second transmission gear ratio; ~~[[and]] or~~

~~[[b2]] completing terminating~~ the first downshifting operation while maintaining the clutch in a disengaged state if the speed of the vehicle is below the predetermined threshold speed.

24. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method according to claim 23, ~~wherein step (b2)~~ further comprising the step of ~~carrying out~~ performing a second downshifting operation, while the clutch remains continually disengaged, if both a reasonably great probability exists that a driver has a desire for positive drive torque as well as desiring uninterrupted travel, and the first downshifting operation is completed while the clutch is disengaged.

25. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim 24, further comprising the step of determining the desire for positive drive torque by an indicator.

26. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim 24, further comprising the step of indicating the desire for the positive drive torque by one or more of:

releasing operative brakes of the vehicle,
deflecting an activation lever for a direction of travel, and
using a steering angle of a vehicle steering mechanism.

27. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim 24, further comprising the steps of indicating the desire for the positive drive torque by using a steering angle of a vehicle steering mechanism and determining ~~a driver's~~ the desire for the positive drive torque by way of overstepping of the steering angle as compared to a predetermined steering angle. ←

28. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim 24, further comprising the step of using, for a determination of the probability of the driver's wish for the positive torque, two or more of named indicators.

29. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim 23, further comprising the step of preventing the downshifting operation if operational brakes of the vehicle are activated.

30. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method according to claim 23, further comprising the step of engaging the clutch when the speed of the vehicle is above the predetermined threshold speed, to complete ~~terminate~~ the downshifting operation, only when a power control member of the motor vehicle is activated. ←

31. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method according to claim 23, further comprising the step of always completing ~~terminating~~ engagement of a gear of the automatic transmission at the end of the downshifting operation with a disengaged clutch when the current gear of the automatic transmission is a starting gear. ←

32. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim 23, further comprising the step of selecting a next gear for a downshift dependent on vehicle deceleration.

33. (CANCELED).

34. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method of operating an automatic transmission of a motor vehicle, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) ~~carrying out~~ initiating a first downshifting operation, only when the vehicle is currently coasting, from a first, higher transmission gear ratio to a second, lower transmission gear ratio during [[a]] coasting mode of the automatic transmission, ~~without any engine braking of the vehicle~~, by: ←

disengaging a clutch located between the automatic transmission and a vehicle engine; ←

shifting from the first, higher transmission gear to the second, lower transmission gear ratio in the automatic transmission; and

one of:

(b1) ~~completing~~ ~~terminating~~ the first downshifting operation by engaging the clutch if a speed of the vehicle is above a predetermined threshold speed greater than zero determined by the second transmission gear ratio so that engine compression influences the vehicle; ~~[[and]]~~ or

(b2) ~~completing~~ ~~terminating~~ the first downshifting operation while maintaining the clutch in a disengaged state if the speed of the vehicle is below the predetermined threshold speed;

detecting a vehicle speed of the vehicle;

(c) if the vehicle speed continues to decrease, carrying out a second downshifting operation of the automatic transmission by

disengaging the clutch, if engaged, ~~[[by]]~~

downshifting from the lower gear to a first next lower gear in the automatic transmission ~~and by one of:~~

(d1) ~~completing~~ ~~terminating~~ the second downshifting operation by engaging the clutch if a speed of the vehicle is above the predetermined threshold speed so that engine compression influences the vehicle; ~~[[and]]~~ or

(d2) ~~completing~~ ~~terminating~~ the second downshifting operation while maintaining the clutch in the disengaged state if the speed of the vehicle is below the predetermined threshold speed; and

determining a driver's desire for positive drive torque; and

terminating the second downshifting operation by engaging the clutch.

35. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method according to claim 34, further comprising the step of determining the driver's desire for positive drive torque by identifying at least one of:

releasing operative brakes of the vehicle,

deflecting an activation lever for a direction of travel; and

a predetermined steering angle of a vehicle steering mechanism; and

activation of a power control member.

36. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method of operating an automatic transmission of a motor vehicle driven by an engine, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) entering a vehicle coasting mode, in which the vehicle is coasting without any power being supplied by the engine without any engine braking, [[by]]

disengaging a clutch, if engaged, located between a vehicle drive motor and the transmission; [[and]]

performing a first downshift from a higher transmission gear ratio to a next lower transmission gear ratio of the automatic transmission;

~~and one of:~~

(b1) re-engaging the clutch with the next lower transmission gear ratio to complete ~~terminate~~ the first downshift if a speed of the vehicle is above a predetermined threshold speed greater than zero determined by the next lower transmission gear ratio; [[and]] or

(b2) maintaining the clutch-transmission, in a disengaged state with the next lower gear to complete ~~terminate~~ the first downshift if a speed of the vehicle is below the predetermined threshold speed; and

(c) ~~in the event that if~~ after the first downshift, then:

disengaging the clutch, if the clutch is engaged;

performing a second downshift from the next lower transmission gear ratio to a second next lower transmission gear ratio, and

(d1) re-engaging the clutch with the second next lower transmission gear ratio to complete ~~terminate~~ the second downshift, if a speed of the vehicle is above the predetermined threshold speed; [[and]] or

(d2) maintaining the clutch in the disengaged state with the second next lower transmission gear ratio to complete ~~terminate~~ the second downshift, if a speed of the vehicle is below the predetermined threshold speed.